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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/733,767	12/08/2000	Joseph Seamon	2043.098US1	2954
49845 7590 06/03/2008 SCHWEGMAN, LUNDBERG & WOESSNER/EBAY P.O. BOX 2938 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402				
EXAMINER THAI, HANH B				
ART UNIT 2163		PAPER NUMBER		
NOTIFICATION DATE 06/03/2008		DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

USPTO@SLWIP.COM

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/733,767

Applicant(s)

SEAMON, JOSEPH

Examiner

HANH B. THAI

Art Unit

2163

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on amendment filed on 1/14/2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-12, 14-18 and 20-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 and 24 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14-18 and 20-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO-SB06)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/10/2007.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The Following is Non-Final Office Action in response to amendment filed January 14, 2008. Independent claims 1, 14, 20, 28 and 29 have been amended. Claims 2, 5, 7, 13 and 19 have been cancelled. Claims 30 and 31 are newly added. Claims 1, 3-4, 6, 8-12, 14-18, 20-31 are pending in this application.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments regarding 101 rejection with respect to 1,3-6, 8-12 and 28-29 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of the claims has been withdrawn.
3. Applicant's arguments regarding "identifying a first hierarchy, of a first hierarch of categories...automatically attributing a second category, of a second alternative hierarchy of categories...the data item is user-classifiable under the first hierarchy of categories..." have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Ortega clearly discloses low-level and high-level categories of hierarchy "tree" based on various pre-defined subjects and classification (col. 3, lines 21-28, Ortega; col.4, lines 16-52 and col. 7, lines 6-24, Ortega).

Fohn, a secondary reference, discloses multiple hierarchies of information including an information hierarchy of categories and an alternative hierarchy of categories (Figs. 6A-6C; col.2, lines 47-61 and col.15, line 63 to col.17, line 29, Fohn) in the manner similar to the

claimed language. Therefore, the combination of Ortega and Fohn discloses the invention as claimed.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 1-12 and 24 are allowed over the art of record.
5. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

The prior art fail to suggest or disclose “a first structure of categories....a second structure of categories as an alternative second hierarchy of categories ...and the second category to point to the first category in the database.”

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 14-18 and 20-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega et al. (U. S. Patent no. 6,489,968 B1) of record in view of Fohn et al. (US 6,460,025 B1)

Regarding claims 14 and 28, Ortega discloses a method of classifying a data item within a database, the method including:

- identifying a first category, of a first hierarchy of categories, attributed to a data item (see col. 1, lines 58-64 and col. 3, lines 12-18, Ortega discloses “higher-level categories” corresponds to “first structure of categories”); and
- automatically attributing a second category, of a second hierarchy of categories, to the data item (see col.3, lines 21-28; col. 4, lines 20-23 and col.7, lines 6-24,

Ortega discloses the “low-level categories” that corresponds to “second structure of categories”), wherein the first and second categories are defined by respective category paths of the first and second hierarchies of categories, the first category path including a first plurality of categories that are respectively associated with a first plurality of category identifiers and the second category path including a second plurality of categories that are respectively associated with a second plurality of category identifiers (col.5, line 1 to col. 6, line 20 and lines 30-39 and col.7, lines 6-50. Ortega discloses the category name that is unique identified and displayed to the user corresponds to “category identifier”).

Ortega, however, does not explicitly disclose “a second alternative hierarchy of categories.” Fohn, on the other hand, discloses a method for improving user exploration through hierarchies of information including an information hierarchy of categories and an alternative hierarchy of categories (Figs. 6A-6C; col.2, lines 47-61 and col.15, line 63 to col.17, line 29, Fohn). Therefore, Fohn discloses the first hierarchy of categories and an alternative second hierarchy of categories. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the method of Ortega to include an alternative second hierarchy of categories as taught by Fohn. The motivation of doing so would have been to increase the popularity of on-line auction services, where a vast array of products being offered at auction are organized into a hierarchy of categories to conveniently direct a shopper’s attention to the items corresponding to his personal interest (see col. 2, lines 18-23, Fohn).

Regarding claim 15, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the first and second categories are associated within a description of categories within the database (see col. 4, lines 29-33, Ortega discloses the “book title” that is description of the book category).

Regarding claim 16, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the first category is attributed to the data item by a user during a user classification operation and the second category is dynamically attributed to the data item during a user navigation operation of the second hierarchy of categories, wherein the dynamic attributing of the second category is performed by identification of an association between the first and second categories (see col. 4, lines 43-67 and col. 4, lines 20-33, Ortega).

Regarding claim 17, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the first category is directly recorded within the database as being attributed to the data item and the second category is recorded as being linked to the first category within the database (see col. 4, lines 53-67, Ortega).

Regarding claim 18, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the first and second categories are each leaf categories of the respective first and second hierarchies of categories (see col. 4, lines 59-67, Ortega).

Regarding claims 20 and 29, Ortega discloses a method of facilitating location of a data item within a database, the method including:

- facilitating user-navigation of a first category structure to select a first category (see col. 1, lines 34-50, Ortega);

- identifying a second category (Outdoors/Events/Olympics) of a second category structure as being linked to the first category (Books/Sports) of the first category structure (col. 1, lines 42-57); and
- identifying data items of the second category responsive to the selection of the first category of the first category structure (see col. 1, line 58 to col. 2, line2, Ortega), wherein the first and second categories are defined by respective category paths of the first and second hierarchies of categories, the first category path including a first plurality of categories that are respectively associated with a first plurality of category identifiers and the second category path including a second plurality of categories that are respectively associated with a second plurality of category identifiers (col.5, line 1 to col. 6, line 20 and lines 30-39 and col.7, lines 6-50. Ortega discloses the category name that is unique identified and displayed to the user corresponds to “category identifier”).

Ortega, however, does not explicitly disclose “the first hierarchy of categories and an alternative second hierarchy of categories.” Fohn, on the other hand, discloses a method for improving user exploration through hierarchies of information including an information hierarchy of categories and an alternative hierarchy of categories (Figs. 6A-6C; col.2, lines 47-61 and col.15, line 63 to col.17, line 29, Fohn). Therefore, Fohn discloses the first hierarchy of categories and an alternative second hierarchy of categories. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the method of Ortega to include an alternative second hierarchy of categories as taught by Fohn. The motivation of doing so would have been to increase the popularity of on-line auction services, where a vast array of

products being offered at auction are organized into a hierarchy of categories to conveniently direct a shopper's attention to the items corresponding to his personal interest (see col. 2, lines 18-23, Fohn).

Regarding claim 21, Ortega/Fohn combination discloses the facilitating of the user navigation of presenting at least one user interface to display navigation information according to the first hierarchy of categories (see col. 1, lines 34-50 and Fig.1A, Fig.2, Ortega);

Regarding claim 22, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the presenting of the at least one user interface comprises generating at least one markup language document (250, Fig. 2 of Ortega discloses the web containing the markup language document).

Regarding claim 23, Ortega/Fohn combination discloses that any one of a group of navigation aids including a drop-down menu, a selection of check boxes, a selection of radio buttons, an embedded Java application and an embedded ActiveX control (see the browser of Fig.1A and Fig.2, Ortega).

Regarding claim 25, Ortega/Fohn combination discloses wherein the identifying of the data items comprises accessing an items table to identify at least a first record identifying the second category (col.7, lines 6-31, Ortega).

Regarding claim 26, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the first and second categories comprise respective leaf categories (see col. 4, lines 59-67, Ortega).

Regarding claims 27-31, Ortega/Fohn combination further discloses the step of communicating the identified data items within a markup language document (250, Fig. 2) transmitted over a network (Fig. 2 of Ortega).

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to HANH B. THAI whose telephone number is (571)272-4029. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thur (7:00AM - 4:30 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Don Wong can be reached on 571-272-1834. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Hanh B Thai
Examiner
Art Unit 2163

April 28, 2008

/don wong/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2163